

Influenza— “The Flu”

2005–2006 Season Update

Prevention and Treatment of Influenza Infection

What is “the flu”?

The flu is a type of germ (called a virus) that you breathe in. It can get into the nose, throat, and lungs. Flu is also called influenza (in-floo-EN-zuh).

How do I know if I have the flu?

If you have the flu, you may have:

- sudden fever
- muscle aches
- chills
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- headache
- red or itchy eyes
- dry cough

You may also feel tired or weak.

What is the flu vaccine?

The flu vaccine can protect you against some types of flu germs. There are two forms:

- The flu “shot” is usually given in the arm. The flu shot cannot make you sick with the flu.
- The flu nasal spray, is a mist that you breathe in through your nose. The nasal spray can be given to healthy people who are between the ages of 5 and 49 years.



If you are allergic to eggs, speak to your health-care provider before getting a flu vaccine.

Who should receive a flu vaccine?

- Adults ≥ 65 years old or older
- Children who are between 6 and 23 months old
- Adults with chronic health problems (such as lung or heart disease, diabetes, HIV/AIDS)
- Children 2 years and older with chronic health problems (such as lung or heart disease, diabetes, HIV/AIDS)
- Woman who are or will be pregnant during flu season
- Children and teenagers who take daily aspirin therapy
- People who live in nursing homes
- People who live with or regularly take care of babies under the age of 6 months
- Healthcare workers who work directly with patients

What else can I do to prevent the flu?

- Wash your hands often and well. Use soap and water or a hand cleaner
- Avoid being near people who are sick
- Eat a healthy diet
- Keep good control of medical problems, such as asthma
- Don't smoke and avoid being around any tobacco smoke
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you sneeze or cough, and throw away the tissue afterward.

What if I have the flu?

- Treat signs of flu with medicines that relieve pain and fever (such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen). Never give a child aspirin without first speaking to your healthcare provider.
- Ask your healthcare provider about prescription medicines that can help your flu symptoms. These medicines have to be started soon after the flu starts in order to help.
- Rest as much as possible
- Drink plenty of liquids
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you sneeze or cough, and throw away the tissue afterward
- Stay home from work or school to keep from giving others the flu.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

Additional Lung Health Information

American Thoracic Society

www.thoracic.org

American Lung Association

www.lungusa.org

ATS Public Advisory Roundtable

www.thoracic.org/aboutats/par/par.asp

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/flu

World Health Organization

www.who.int/topics/influenza/en/

Health and Human Services

www.hhs.gov/flu/

Rx What to do...

- ✓ Ask if you are in a high-risk group for the flu. If you are not sure, call your doctor or clinic to find out.
- ✓ If you need a flu vaccine, get it as soon as possible. It is best to have the flu vaccine before December.
- ✓ Wash your hands often and well
- ✓ Keep chronic diseases like asthma in good control.
- ✓ Keep your body healthy with diet, exercise and no smoking!
- ✓ If you think you have the flu, stay home and contact your healthcare provider

Healthcare Provider's Office Telephone: